

Hanson, MA Area F  
South Hanson  
United Cape Cod Cranberry Company  
Area Data Sheet

<u>MHC</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Street</u>	<u>Style/Form</u>	<u>Date</u>
118	Main Building	1011	Main Street	industrial	ca. 1910
119	Packing Building	1011	Main Street	industrial	ca. 1910
120	Maintenance Building	1012	Main Street	industrial	ca. 1910

FORM A - AREA

Massachusetts Historical Commission  
Massachusetts Archives Building  
220 Morrissey Boulevard  
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Assessor's #  
42/11, 56. 60a

USGS Quad  
Whitman

Area  
F

Form #  
118, 119, 120

Town Hanson

Place South Hanson

Name of Area United Cape Cod Cranberry  
Central Packing House

Present Use processing & packing

Construction Dates ca. 1900-10 with later  
additions

Overall Condition good

Major Intrusions none

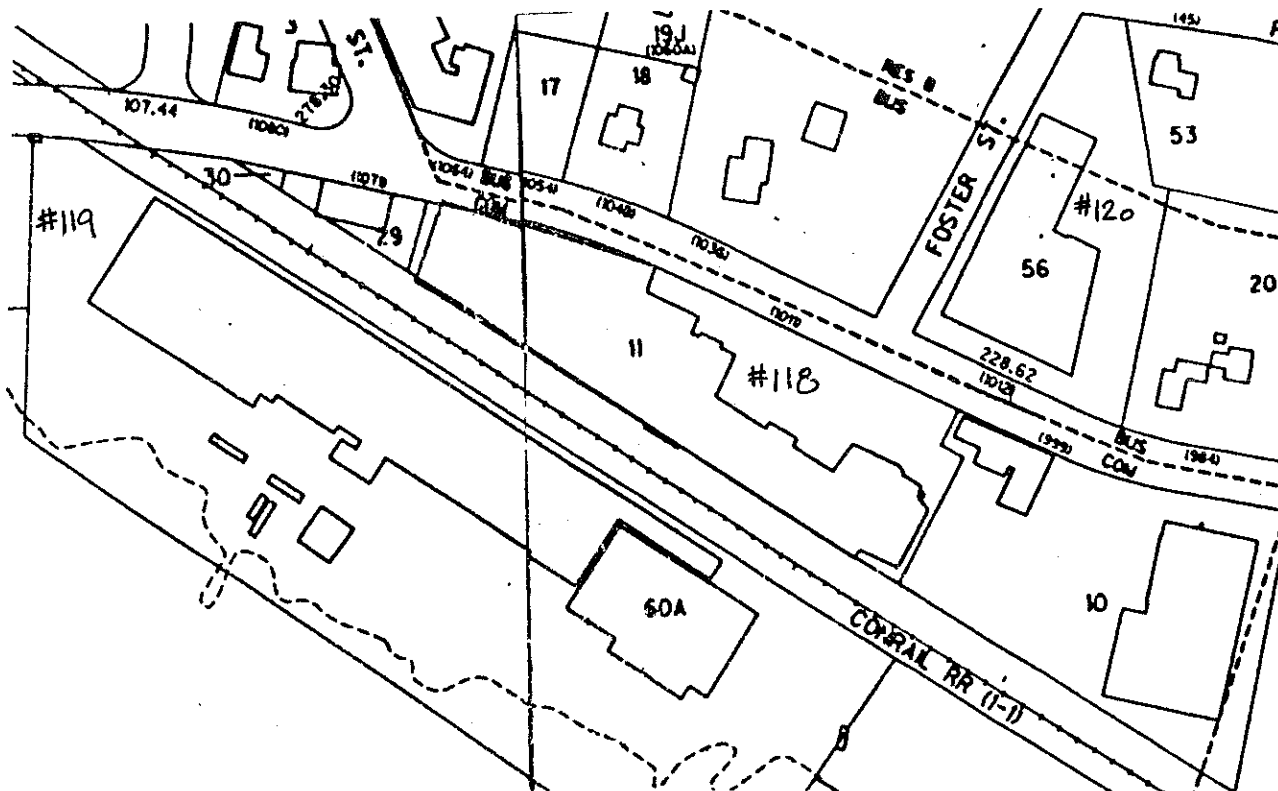
Acreage about three acres

Recorded by Dempsey/Driemeyer

Organization Hanson  
Historical Commission

Date May 1996

Sketch Map



## AREA FORM

## United Cape Cod Cranberry Co. Area, Hanson MA

### ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION (see continuation sheet)

The United Cape Cod Cranberry Company's Central Packing House is a large, low complex of buildings, probably the largest in Hanson and dominating the landscape in the village of South Hanson. The complex is divided into three sections, all along the corridor formed by South Main Street and the Old Colony Railroad line. The core and original section of the plant (#118) is the central brick section of the irregular building which stretches over 600 feet along the south side of the street and north of the railroad line. On the opposite side of the railroad track a long, more regular rectangle stretches 750 feet (#119). A third far smaller building is located across South Main Street at the corner of Foster Street (#120). The buildings have grown slowly over the 20th century and have recently received alterations including the application of synthetic siding over their frame and brick walls. They are currently leased to a variety of retail and small-manufacturing operations and are not fully occupied.

### HISTORIC NARRATIVE (see continuation sheet)

The United Cape Cod Cranberry Company's Central Packing House is perhaps the most durable monument to Marcus L. Urann (1873-1963), a cranberry entrepreneur who revolutionized the industry in Hanson and throughout the United States by advocating the canning of cranberries and the formation of the Ocean Spray co-operative. Urann was born in Maine, receiving his undergraduate degree at the University of Maine (1897) before attending Boston University School of Law (1900), and practicing law in Easton, MA. He is said to have been introduced to the profit potential of cranberries by a client and purchased his first bog in Halifax in 1906. He formed the United Cape Cod Cranberry Company in 1906 and soon thereafter established a centralized plant for screening, grading, sorting, packing, and shipping cranberries, all processes that formerly took place in small frame bog houses at each cranberry bog. The central brick building of the surviving complex was the original building what would later become the Ocean Spray empire. As Urann shifted his emphasis to cranberry canning, and pressed the entire industry in that direction, this complex was expanding to accommodate facilities for cooking, canning, labeling, packing, and shipping cranberry sauce and probably cranberry juice cocktail. Finally freezing capacity was added to the mix in the 1960s.

### REFERENCES

"History of Hanson," 1962.  
Thomas, Joseph D., ed. *Cranberry Harvest*, 1990.  
Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Whitman, 1939 updated 1951.

X Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. See NR Criteria Statement form attached.

## INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

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Boston MA 02125

Community      Property Address  
**Hanson**      **Main Street**

Form # 118, 119, 120

Area      **United Cape Cod Cranberry Co.,  
Central Packing House**      **F**

## ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION, continued.

The original appearance of the first packing plant here is visible in spite of later alterations and additions. The flat-roofed building is two stories in height over a raised basement, with its flat facade broken by narrow panels of brick dividing the plane into three sections. Its parapet top is higher over the center section. Broad openings are centered on the building, now partially closed as windows, and each side has a pair of sash on the first level and a single window centered above it. The openings are all headed with segmental arches and the parapet's base is edged with corbelling. By the 1920s the building had been significantly expanded with frame additions to both the east and the west, still sitting on their brick raised basements. Although they both appear to have been originally storage areas, suggested by broad openings and small numbers of windows that were the earlier facade treatments, the western section nearest the brick core in particular has had windows added to light the interior office space. The western-most frame section has retained much of its earlier appearance, in spite of the addition of a third story and a small single-story front-gabled section. The wide gabled block is lit with bands of windows pictured in the early-20th century photographs. The large frame eastern section near the street combined storage and screening on two levels. Further to the east a long brick stem, narrow and flanking the rail line, appears also to have been a storage area. At the eastern edge of the complex the power house is distinguished by its tall chimney stack, more ornamented than its neighbors, with cast stone trim.

Across the tracks from the main complex, a large building is pierced regularly by loading openings all along the railroad track. Its rear elevation includes some breaks in the long plane, related to the variety of functions with the building, including cooking, labeling, and packing. At the far eastern end a square freezer building was added in the 1960s. Across South Main Street, the final building of the complex is a brick and frame building of two stories which served as the company carpentry shops and garage, among other functions. Its brick first floor is still visible but its second level has been covered in synthetic siding and additional windows have been added across front and side elevations.

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Community    Property Address  
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Form # 118, 119, 120

Area    **United Cape Cod Cranberry Co.,  
Central Packing House    F**

**HISTORICAL NARRATIVE, continued.**

Unlike most men and women of the Massachusetts cranberry industry, Urann came to the business as a marketer rather than as a grower. At the turn of the century, the cranberry industry was entering a period of rapid change, when the labor, equipment, and sales were all being transformed from the small-scale family-based agricultural pursuit of the 19th century. Like other farming tasks, many of the steps of cranberry picking and preparing for sale were mechanized for the first time, in the shift from hand to scoop picking, and with an array of cleaning and sorting tools in the now centralized packing plants. Finnish and Cape Verdean pickers were added to the labor pool, replacing children and some New England farmers as bogs increased in number and in size. At the same time, the marketing of cranberries was changing, as commission merchants and dealers were replaced by growers' cooperative-marketing groups. The most successful of these, the National Fruit Exchange, worked to maintain prices and control sales to benefit the growers, while using careful grading and branding to gain consumer confidence and keep berry quality high. Urann came to the cranberry industry as a strong supporter of the Exchange and of New England Cranberry Sales, its New England sales agency, serving as a founder and leader in each organization. Urann's own company, United Cape Cod Cranberry grew very rapidly, and within three years his stock had a value of half a million dollars and he was one of the region's largest growers.

Urann was important in the shift of the cranberry industry to centralized sorting and packing operations, but perhaps his most important role was in the shift of cranberry crop sales from fresh berries to canned sauce and juice cocktail. As early as 1912, Urann began canning under the Ocean Spray label at his South Hanson plant, providing a profitable use for berries that did not meet the standards for fresh sales and shrewdly recognizing the future for convenience foods. In 1930, Urann was the primary force behind an effort to merge three of the largest cranberry canners, himself, Makepeace of Barnstable, and Elizabeth Lee of New Jersey. Since they would then control 90% of the canned cranberry market, Urann's legal advisors recommended that the group organize as a growers' marketing co-operative exempt from key anti-trust law. Negotiations for this merger were difficult, because Makepeace, like other cranberry growers before and after him were wary of Urann's motives. The final agreement meant that Urann turned over his very large canning operation and its Ocean Spray name to the new organization, in return for 50% ownership; Makepeace received 25% and the remaining 25% was controlled by Lee and other small growers. The organization was first known as Cranberry Canners, Inc., next as National Cranberry, and finally as Ocean Spray.

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Area      **United Cape Cod Cranberry Co.,  
Central Packing House F**

## HISTORICAL NARRATIVE, continued.

The early years of the marketing were not smooth ones, with stiff competition between Cranberry Cannors and the old National Exchange, and volatile relations between Urann and Makepeace. Although the Exchange retained control of fresh berry sales, the need of the canning cooperative for berries brought the two organizations into competition, with Urann constantly pressing for higher proportions of the crop to be designated for canning. Tensions were exacerbated after Word War Two when all of the major players were competing for berries for both fresh and canned sales and growers were caught between their multiple buyers. After many complex reorganizations of the ownership of these major, and several shot-lived minor operations, Ocean Spray eventually absorbed most of its competitors and the cranberry crop was shifted to canning operations. With that triumph in 1953, Marcus L. Urann retired.

The South Hanson operation of Ocean Spray was recently closed and the complex turned over to office space and small manufacturing. Ocean Spray continues to use innovative marketing to expand its sales. During the 1970s, the increased sales of cranberry juice cocktail and mixed fruit beverages brought another dramatic change to the industry, which now sends 90% of the crop to juice production.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

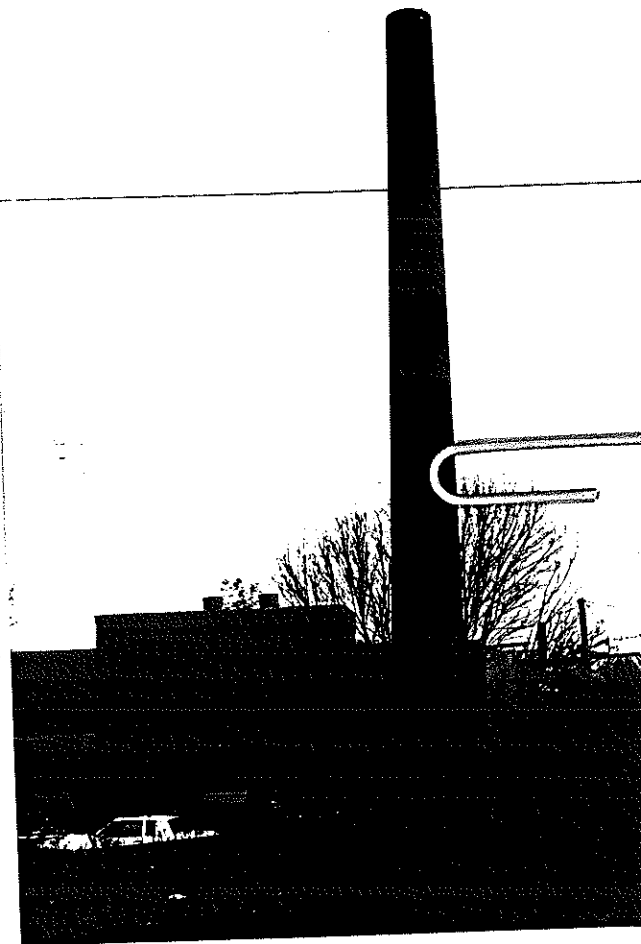
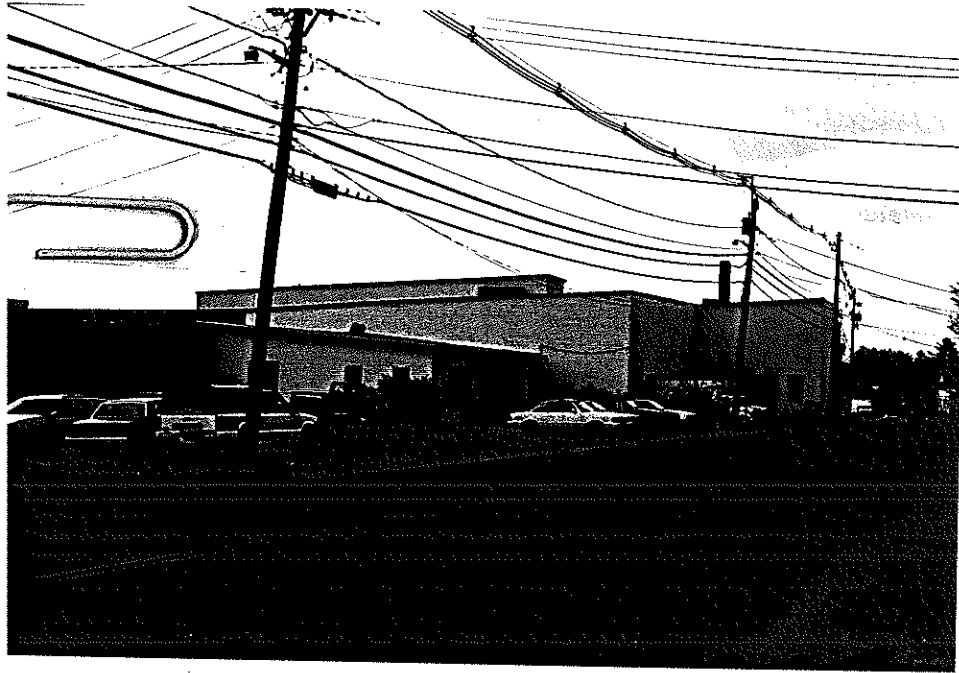
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Hanson

Property Address  
South Main Street

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Area United Cape Cod Cranberry Co.  
Central Packing House F



INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

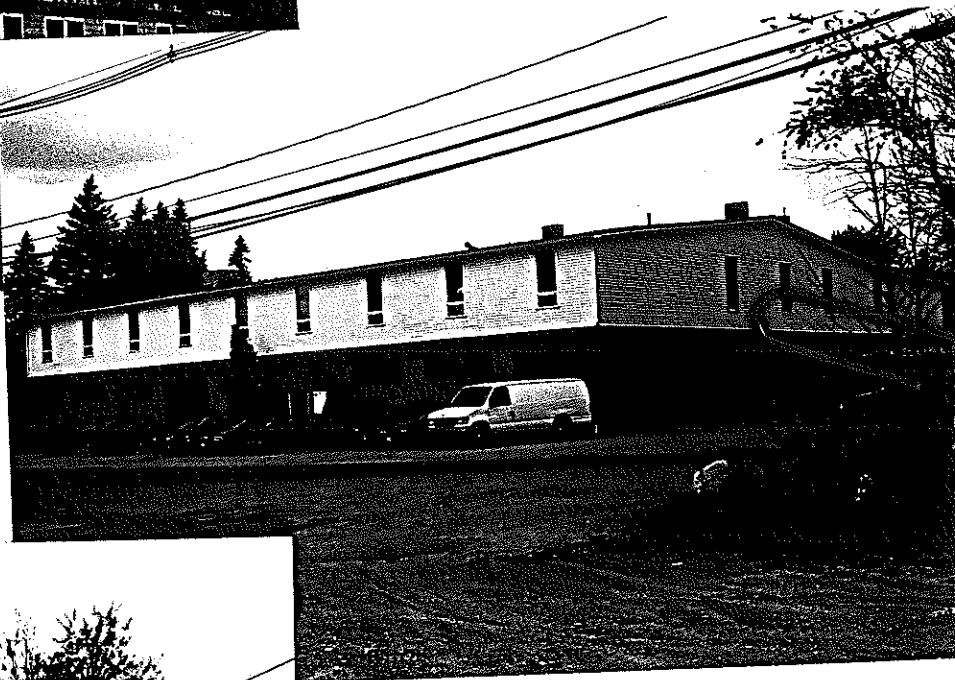
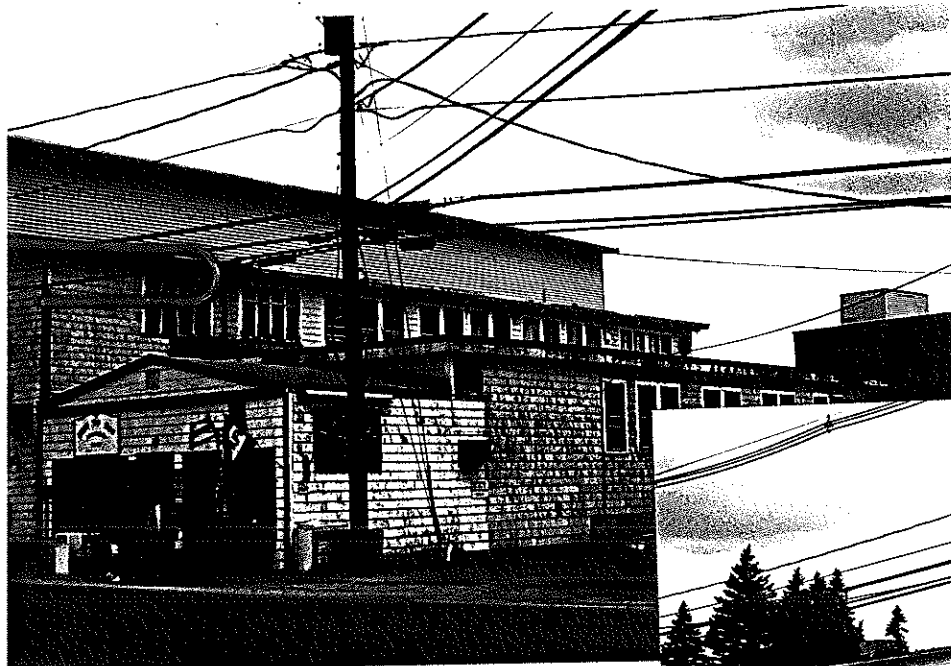
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Area  
**F**

Form #  
**118, 119, 120**

## National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form



Check all that apply:

☐ Individually eligible.  
☐ Contributing to a potential district.

☐ Eligible only in a historic district.  
☒ Potential historic district.

Criteria: ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Statement of Significance by **Dempsey/Driemeyer**.

The Cape Cod Cranberry Central Packing House area is significant for its association with the Massachusetts cranberry industry, in particular the activities of Marcus Uran. Uran's efforts early in the 20th century produced the structure of the industry we know today and thus the complex may be of state level significance. Although expanded during its potential period of significance and altered since that time, the building includes remnants of all its components and is worthy of closer examination and protection. This area is likely to meet criteria A, B, and C, and retains integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association.